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ABSTRACT

One of a series of work-based interviews about occupations in Australia, this booklet presents a personal interview with a franchise gardener (mostly a person who mows lawns) about his job. The following questions are answered: what the gardener does, why the person chose the field of employment, how the person found out about the job, what he does and doesn't like about it, what kind of training was needed, what the gardener does during a working week, his co-workers, and the hours. Cartoons are used to enliven the material, and a glossary of 33 words is included. Although designed to be used in literacy classes with adult new readers, the booklets are also appropriate for use with elementary and secondary students in career exploration and career education. (KC)

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ED 399 457

Hazel Edwards'

Workdays

a day in the life of ...

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a Franchise Gardener

CE 072 598

Workdays

a day in the life of ...

a Franchisee Gardener

Name Rob Fuller

Aged 24

Workdays
a day in the life of...
a Franchisee Gardener

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WHAT KIND OF BUSINESS ARE YOU IN?

The business is run by me. I work the hours I want and charge what I like. My business is a *franchise*. I use their name. Their advertising helps me. The franchise owners get a share of what I earn. In return, the owners of the franchise feed me new work.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS WORK?

I didn't know what I wanted to do. I like working outside. I could be my own boss. In the past, I 'd had a few bad bosses.

WHAT DOES YOUR WORK MEAN TO YOU?

My work means money, an income.

BOB'S GARDEN CARE
OH. OH...
THERE GOES THE NEIGHBOURHOOD!

HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT THE FRANCHISE?

There was an advertisement in the newspaper. I rang up for an interview. During the interview, he gave me brochures. These are leaflets about the job.

He explained what the franchise meant. You spend four weeks with a guy who already has a round. This is your training. During this training, you are paid a basic wage of $250.00 a week. Then you decide whether you want to stay or leave.

The franchise fee for an existing round is about ten grand ($10,000) for the *goodwill*. You get about fifty to sixty lawns. Goodwill is the 'good' name that a business has built up. The new buyer has to pay for the fact that customers are already there.

MacGarman.
THE LONELINESS OF
A LONG DISTANCE MOWER

WHAT KIND OF WORK DO YOU DO?

I just mow lawns. I start about 8 - 8.30 a.m. until about 4 p.m. I'm not often out after half past four. I take at least three quarters of an hour for lunch. Mowing is hard work.

If you don't take a break, you can completely stuff yourself. Mainly I cut lawns. Some weeks I cut down trees or remove rubbish. But if you do things like weeding or gardening, you get behind on your lawns. But if people want me to do weeding, I do. On average I do eight lawns a day. Some days it's ten when there are smaller jobs to do. At the moment I have plenty of customers. It's a *high turnover rate*. In two years I've picked up about 40 customers. I've also lost about 25 customers. A lot of that is because people move on or buy their own mower.

WHAT'S THE WORK LIKE?

I didn't think it would be as boring. I don't often meet customers. If I stop to chat it's five minutes at the most.

If you're doing eight jobs a day and you stop for ten minutes at each job, you've lost eighty minutes. That's thirty or forty bucks lost. Headphones are impossible. I'd have to have the radio turned up so high. My ears have already been damaged from the machinery. My girlfriend worked with me one day. But that's not the answer. You can do more with two, but the income would be halved. Then I wouldn't have a full week's work.

DO YOU HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH OTHERS IN THE SAME WORK?

I talk to the guy who works alongside my area. We have agreed to help each other if we get behind. But we haven't done it yet. We did talk about working together on the same jobs for company, and to motivate each other.

In the end we decided not to. There's a high turnover with this type of franchise. People come in. Then they leave because it's not what they expected.

IN THE FUTURE, WILL MORE PEOPLE NEED HELP AROUND THE HOME?

Yes, people's jobs demand more time. They can't get into the garden to do their lawns the way they used to. Household services is a growth area. But more and more people are offering those services. It's becoming very competitive. Franchise gardening is easy to get into. You don't need qualifications. This is why more people are entering the area. If you're competent and seem suited to the job, it's easy to enter.

WHAT TOOLS DO YOU USE?

I use a brush cutter for edges and to trim around trees. I use a standard mower for the lawns. I use an air blower for the paths. I bought them when I first started.

HEEERE -
PUSS-PUSS-
PUSS...
WILLGOODWIN.

WHAT ARE THE GOOD THINGS ABOUT YOUR TYPE OF WORK?

It gives me a good income. It filled in a couple of years when I didn't know what I wanted to do. I liked being outside. The hours are good. In summer I might work half a day at weekends but not in winter. I might take the Friday or Monday off. Mowing lets me do my own thing. There's no *pressure*. Nothing has to be done tomorrow.

I like looking back at a good job. When I drive away in the van, I like to look back and see that the garden looks better. I used to be a sales rep. That didn't have the same interest.

HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU MAKE?

We work off $25-30 per hour.

WHO DECIDES WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

I make my own *decisions*, but there aren't many.

SPLAT
WILL GOODWIN
CHOOSE GOOD PROTECTIVE WEAR.

ARE THERE ANY CHANCES FOR PROMOTION?

Only as an *area manager* to oversee 3-4 others.

HAVE ANY FUNNY THINGS HAPPENED?

I've fallen out of a few trees. One day I was hanging from one branch and cutting the other. Because of my weight, it broke. I nearly cut myself in half.

Some days you're covered in dog shit if you don't use a catcher on the mower. That's not funny!

IF YOU COULD START AGAIN, WHAT ELSE MIGHT YOU DO?

I haven't really got much of an idea. Because I wasn't trained I'm a bit limited in what I can do.

The Fire Brigade is one option I'll seriously consider next year.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR OTHERS?

Be aware of how lonely and boring this job is.

DO YOU HAVE ANY OUTSIDE INTERESTS?

Football is number one in my life. I did the mowing so I could get to footy training. Mowing is harder work that I'd imagined. It has taken the edge off my football. I go to training at maybe 5 o'clock and I'm almost completely stuffed. I can't train as hard nor as fast. On Saturdays I'm a bit rundown. During winter, I have Friday afternoons off so I can play footy on Saturday afternoon.

WHAT OTHER WORK HAVE YOU DONE?

After finishing H.S.C. at school, I did three years as a sales rep. selling windows and doors.

Then I was a labourer for twelve months.

I wanted to be a *professional sportsman*. From 17 until 21, I put all my energies into football. After that, for various reasons, they didn't want me. I made some pretty good money out of football. But I didn't train for a career. I loved playing football. I wanted to play at the highest level and I did. It was great. I'd love to still be doing that, but I can't. In two or three years, I'll coach.

At one stage I had two incomes. I was earning money from being a sales rep. and from being a footballer. It helped me set up this business and buy a house. The guys who were as good as me at football but who played it socially and kept studying, have gone right past me now.

GLOSSARY

franchise	*permit/right to use a business idea*
goodwill	*the value of a firm's success and reputation*
high turnover rate	*regularly changing one customer with another*
pressure	*stress*
decisions	*final choices*
area manager	*a person in charge of a region*
option	*a chance to choose*
rundown	*weaker, more tired*
professional sportsman	*earns a living from sport*

Workdays is based on real people in real jobs. The aim of the series is to provide simply written, interesting and relevant material for new readers.

Author.Hazel Edwards' method of researching is by interview and visiting the workplace.

Her previous one hundred books have included adult literacy, scripts, non-fiction, crime and childrens books. Currently she is researching other workplaces for more books in the ' day in a life of ' series.

Gardner : franchisee	Police
the Chef	Customs Officer
Vet Nurse	Family Garage Owner
Computer Salesman	Fruiterer
Offshore Platform Worker	Plumber
(current series)	(in production)

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